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CPAC Newsletter

COMMUNITY PLANNING
As Seen By The Press

With Special Reference to Community Planning Week

By ERIC BEECROFT

Within our own official family, there was some jesting about "Community Planning Week". Our most sophisticated personages, and even a few of the moderately sophisticated, expressed doubt about the value of inserting a Planning Week between Cherry Pie Week and Expectant Fathers' Week. Having shared a little in this merriment, I now confess that I must renounce some of my own doubts. I have seen results and have been impressed.

Whether this confession leads on to the conclusion that a certain week should be dedicated to Community Planning throughout Canada, I do not venture to say. I have always been partial to the belief that mothers, fathers and other objects of our affection are properly honoured only when we give them our faithful attention throughout the year. Special eloquence on one occasion may be the means of lulling our conscience the rest of the time.

Of course, the CPAC, from Divisional Offices and from Ottawa, issued a good deal of material to the newspapers for the celebration of Community Planning Week. On reading press clippings, however, several points stand out clearly: first, that in a great many communities, editors took advantage of the "Week" to reinforce the planning efforts of citizens in their own areas; secondly, that many editors, while referring to items received from the CPAC, wrote eloquent supporting comments on the objectives of community planning; and thirdly, that the newspapers showed a high appreciation of the need for technical planning services in their communities.

Strong Support for Professional Planning

Those who have felt that CPAC should emphasize the training of planners will be particularly gratified to see how advanced public opinion seems to be on this subject. The press seemed to be particularly interested in our statements about the need for professional planners; Jacques Simard's statement to the effect that only 6% of the communities under 25,000 population had planning services was widely quoted throughout the country. Typical of many comments in the smaller cities and towns was the following from *L'Avenir du Nord* of St. Jerome:

> "Planning should not be imposed upon the community; on the contrary, it is the citizens who should initiate it. For this reason, it will be highly advantageous if St. Jerome's municipal authorities will avail themselves of the knowledge of a technician who can dedicate his activities to the layout of a community like ours in cooperation with the city's leading authorities. To enable the body of citizens to foresee and to control the future development of the whole urban complex, to safeguard their material interests, to save their time and energy, to protect their health, and to ensure the expansion of all of their activities in joy and harmony: these are the functions of the community planner.

Le Soleil's appeal for expert planning was based on the principle that "to have beauty plus utility is even less costly than improvisations and speculative construction." In its

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issue of June 14th, it devoted a special article to professional training for community planning in Canada, describing what had already been accomplished in the advanced schools at McGill under Professor Harold Spence-Sales, at Manitoba under Professor V. J. Kostka, at British Columbia under Professor Peter Oberlander, and in the recently-discontinued curriculum at the University of Toronto.

Support of Local Planning Efforts

Community Planning Week prompted the *Ottawa Citizen*, on June 18, to reflect on the basic difficulties involved in carrying out municipal plans. It claimed that the green belt area, which was to have surrounded Ottawa, was gradually being eaten away because rural township councils could not withstand pressures from landowners and urban sub-dividers and from ratepayers who saw development as a means of spreading the tax load. The lesson it drew was that, through provincial or other means, groups of municipalities must be brought to work in concert; for the failure of one to cooperate could cause the whole structure to crumble.

La Tribune of Sherbrooke was typical of the papers celebrating Community Planning Week by supporting the recommendations of its own fellow citizens. After complimenting the CPAC for its nation-wide effort, it drew attention to a brief drawn up recently by the Sherbrooke section of the CPAC of which the president is Mr. Denis Tremblay, and the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce, whose president is Mr. John L. Blue. Quoting at length from the brief, *La Tribune* urged the municipal authorities to study and support the suggestion that a planning board should be established in Sherbrooke to prepare, in cooperation with the city council and representatives of civic groups, a comprehensive plan looking toward the development of an urban territory with 150,000 to 200,000 population.

Le Nouvelliste of Three Rivers took Mr. Simard's statements as the text for a forceful leading article entitled "*Three Rivers Needs a Long-Range Master Plan*". It concluded as follows:

> The case applies especially to Three Rivers, where there have been years of great activity in the construction of new dwellings. But other developments will soon take place in the fields of housing, industry and commerce; and it will be urgent to anticipate them, so that they will respond to our needs instead of creating other still more serious problems.

The Seaway

In the seaway area, there were a number of Community Planning Week comments. Cornwall's *Daily Standard Freeholder* took occasion to point out that the whole Cornwall district needed planning on a local and regional basis: the village of Iroquois had already engaged a planning expert to advise and assist with plans for the post-seaway town which would be in an entirely new location. The paper paid tribute to the benefits which Cornwall and the surrounding areas had already received from their district planning board.

Manitoba's Planning-Mindedness

In no province was there more interest shown by the smaller newspapers than in Manitoba. Community Planning was publicized in scores of communities by news stories and editorial comment. In Winnipeg, long known for its progress in planning, the daily papers gave the subject careful attention. The *Free Press* wrote an interesting review of the achievements of planning in Greater Winnipeg; but at the same time it described problems ahead and warned that there was no ground for complacency.

The *Tribune* took particular pride in pointing out that the idea of Community Planning Week originated in the Manitoba Division of CPAC three years ago. It cited the enormous benefits enjoyed by Greater Winnipeg from the Master Plan which, as a result of the foresight of the Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations, was inaugurated in 1944. "A Master Plan", it declared, "is a citizens' plan. Its usefulness and rewards lie in the field of better living... and depend on the degree to which the average citizen interests himself in the things that mean the difference between a live town and a dormitory".

The Next Ten Years

Great interest was shown in the CPAC prediction that during the next ten years Canada would construct about one million new homes covering a quarter of a million acres, or about 360 square miles. The idea that this gigantic development might take place in the same wasteful, inefficient manner as in the past seemed to be a sobering thought to many writers. Typical of feature editorials inspired by this theme were those in the *Moncton Transcript; La Voix de l'Est* of Granby, Quebec; the *Daily News* of St. John's and the *Owen Sound Sun Times*. "The time is past," the *Sun Times* declared, "when industrial and residential expansion can be left to the whims of individuals if the economic and aesthetic interests of the community are to be safeguarded". Like many communities, Owen Sound, or rather Grey County, had apparently become interested in planning initially through its interest in attracting new industry. This seems to be a typical stage in the progress of many communities toward a consistent interest in planning.

"*Ugliness and Mediocrity of Our Urban Landscape*"

One of the most thoughtful articles which appeared in response to Community Planning Week was in *L'Action Catholique* of Quebec City on June 16th. Using the title quoted above, the author, Charles Pelletier, drew attention to the Quebec CPAC's memorandum to the Tremblay Commission describing the condition of the cities and towns in the province of Quebec. He warned especially of the ways in which short-sighted, speculative groups were able to frustrate well-meaning town councils who were ordinarily distracted by financial and other planning

problems and not sufficiently informed to consider alternative plans. Mr. Pelletier asked for revision of the urban planning laws. He argued the case for provincial planning and finally appealed for the formation of an expert and tenacious opinion capable of following through toward planning objectives.

Every Week a Planning Week

It is evident that Quebec and Manitoba newspapers took the lead in editorial comment during the "Week". In Ontario, however, news stories and brief comments appeared in scores of papers, from the *Standard* of St. Catharines to the *Daily Nugget* of North Bay. If in British Columbia there was less interest shown in Community Planning Week *per se*, this may be related to the fact that the press in that province is normally very busy with community planning problems.

Indeed, I think it is correct to say that, for several newspapers in several of the provinces, every week is community planning week. In a single issue (July 2) of *The Globe and Mail*, I found no less than three feature articles on important problems of planning: (1) the drastic reduction of agricultural acreage resulting from urban growth in the Niagara peninsula; (2) the grave problem of Ontario schools in competing for sites; and (3) Toronto's urgent need for redevelopment in its central areas.

There can be no question of the eagerness of editors for stories regarding local redevelopment and progress of urban growth. These are newsworthy subjects everywhere, and, it seems likely that the CPAC divisions, if they organize material for local papers, will find a cooperative response throughout the year.

Aesthetic and Social Considerations

It may be surprising to some readers to find how many editors in all parts of the country took up the aesthetic aspects of community planning—sometimes to the exclusion of other aspects. There is a strong feeling now that the drabness of buildings and the neglect of landscape which we tolerated in our haste for shelter are no longer really necessary. Persistent and imaginative leadership will go a long way now to compel attention to appearances. I believe that in the next ten years, Canada will be a rich field for architects, landscapers, and builders with a community planning outlook.

Of course it is true that some of the concern about appearances arises from a desire to impress and attract tourists. No less an authority than Mr. D. Leo Dolan, Director of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau issued a statement, prior to "Community Planning Week", regarding the importance to the tourist business of attractively planned communities. This statement was one of those most widely quoted from Newfoundland to British Columbia. Some newspapers went farther and urged that attention to good appearances attracted industry and permanent residents.

Beyond the superficial interest in aesthetics, whether for commercial or other reasons, lies a concern for the kind of community planning which will satisfy a deeper-felt social need. I did not find this aspect of the matter stressed during "The Week"; but, in *The Globe and Mail* of July 12th, I do find a statement of something like the ultimate objective of community planning:

> "The general failure to plan the framework of our new areas, so that our living arrangements are in natural communities, is one of the most unfortunate weaknesses of our post-war growth. In only a few cases has there been a conscious intent to develop a centre in our housing subdivisions. We do not mean simply a building or meeting place, but a natural focus for common interests and ideals.
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> "This is, in most cases, a multiple product. It comprises parks, schools, churches, an auditorium, recreational facilities and sometimes a theatre. But it is also not merely material assets, but a more abstract feeling, produced by a neighbourly loyalty—an essentially human achievement. All these cannot be produced by order, but there are intangible factors, such as geography, road boundaries, work opportunities, and the like, which tend to shape the character of a community.
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> "It is a pity that we are not insisting on organizing our new developments on a neighborhood basis. This could be done if our planning function were unified, integrated and effective over the whole area, and if it were in the hands of planners who knew something about urban life and its dangers. As it is, however, we are continuing to make the same mistakes which afflict the older sections of the central city. We are perpetuating forms which destroy community life and isolate families from each other. This is a crime against posterity for which there is no excuse in 1954. We ought to be able to profit not only from the mistakes of the past, but from the thinking of the present. When will somebody insist that we do both?"

Was Planning Week a Success?

There is no doubt that the information given to the press during Community Planning Week excited interest among editors and newswriters. But it is also true, as shown by the press in British Columbia and other areas where "The Week" was not emphasized, that the press is ready to write all year round about community planning if there are local bodies actively assembling and disseminating material of local interest.

The "Week" simply gave us added support for the conclusion that Canadian public interest in planning is ready to become articulate and forceful. If anything, it may be in our organized expression of planning needs and remedies that we are lagging. Newspapers, broadcasting facilities and other media may be standing ready to nourish our interest if we assert it.

If, in community groups, we put forth, not one, but fifty-two weeks of effort per year, I am sure that we shall see gratifying results. If, within a few years, we succeed as well as we should with many factors in our favor, Community Planning Week may be no more necessary than Go-to-School Week or Brush-Your-Teeth Week.

ERIC BEECROFT

Our New Director

Dear Members of CPAC:—

Since the regretted departure of our famous original Executive Director, Alan Armstrong, for a higher post, we have been running the Central Office as best we could, with the generous part-time help of Jacques Simard, and the support of the faithful and experienced Miss Laventure, while concerning ourselves with the far from easy task of finding a full-time successor to Mr. Armstrong. We are happy to announce that Central Office is at last properly reconstituted, and that the Association's new Director, Eric Beecroft, began his duties in the National Office on June 28th.

Canadian-born and a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.A. and M.A. in Political Economy) and Yale University (Ph.D.), Mr. Beecroft has had a varied experience in universities and in public service. Before World War II he served for nine years at the University of California and for a short period at the National Planning Association in Washington, D.C. The years 1942-45 he spent in war trade and supply activities of the United States Government, ending up in charge of United States lend-lease and purchasing operations in India, Ceylon and Afghanistan. For two years after the war, he was a Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior.

Since 1947 Mr. Beecroft has been a Loan Officer for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, making economic and financial surveys and conducting loan negotiations in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Ethiopia and the Philippines. Now that he is back in Canada, he may cease to be international, but in community planning he will still find plenty of "reconstruction and development".

We feel that with this appointment we may hope to enter on a period of marked activity and growth. We must become larger and put more drive into our business. With Mr. Beecroft's help we hope to do it.

Yours very sincerely,

BRIAN DUNFIELD,
National President, CPAC.

Scholarship Announcement

Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation recently announced the awarding of ten fellowships for post-graduate study in Community Planning for the academic year 1954-55. The fellowships, which are for $1,200.00 each, have been awarded to: J. B. Chaster, L. W. H. Laine and R. B. Chilton of Vancouver, B.C.; John B. Sutherland of Port Arthur, Ontario; W. Spotowski of Edmonton, Alberta; O. Sawchuck of Sudbury, Ontario; A. Faintuck of Winnipeg, Manitoba; C. W. Raymond of Woodstock, New Brunswick; R. Moriyama of Hamilton, Ontario; and Robert E. Cassidy of Truro, Nova Scotia.

B.C.'s TOM MCDONALD

Planning Personality

Since the end of the last war, Community Planning has become a major influence in the development of B.C. communities. There is ample evidence, when one peruses the daily press of the two metropolitan areas, Vancouver and Victoria, or even some of the smaller towns like Chilliwack, Trail or Prince George, that Planning is in the air. Dozens of items are discussed in the newspapers in one way or another demonstrating the growing consciousness of the importance of planning and its real success in many cases. No one has done more in bringing about this climate of growing understanding than Tom McDonald.

Tom has been executive secretary of the B.C. Division since its inception in 1947 and has single-handedly organized the Divisional Office and upwards of two dozen regional conferences throughout the Province. From his lofty office on the 12th floor of the Vancouver Block overlooking the entire metropolitan area, he has truly promoted and successfully advanced the cause of Planning.

Apart from his tireless devotion to CPAC and his programme of conferences, lectures and meetings, Tom McDonald is a planner in his own right and occupies a singular position in the planning administration of Vancouver. In 1948 he was appointed Chairman of the City Zoning Board of Appeal and is acting in this capacity today. He was the "Third Man" of the Board, having been selected by the two others representing the City and the Province, respectively, under our Provincial Planning Act. In other words, in the person of Tom McDonald we have the happy combination of the citizen's interest in planning with the expert's knowledge of the planning process.

Tom was born just before the turn of the century in Scotland and went to school in the South of England before coming to Canada in 1913. Two years later we find him back in England, this time as a member of the 43rd Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders, complete with Kilt! During the 20's, Tom worked for the Government on its Pension Board and later on became Superintendent of the Extension Department of a Fraternal Life Insurance Company covering the three Western Provinces. During a busy business career, his World War I disability claimed much time; and partly for his health and partly because of his great and searching interest in many things he travelled extensively in Europe, visiting the Continent four times. Tom spent a good deal of time in France, Switzerland and Italy and often draws on his memories and experiences there when discussing planning problems in B.C. communities.

Just before World War II the doctor advised Tom to come to the Coast and settle in Vancouver. This has been the good luck of CPAC in this area, since his long interest in community affairs soon found application in Planning. One of his first important services to Vancouver was as Campaign Manager for the Civic Centre Campaign, launched with con-

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The Syntax of Civic Design

Design in Town and Village by Thomas Sharp, Frederick Gibberd and William G. Holford, with a Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1952. Frontis., vi plus 120 pages, 209 drawings and photos. (Available through United Kingdom Information Office, Ottawa, $1.70).

This book, we are told by the sponsoring Minister in his foreword, "discusses problems of design in the grouping and layout of buildings . . . A great deal has been done to improve individual houses. But the general effect has too often been dull . . ." Three individuals have been asked to contribute from their experience, since the questions involved are "very much matters for individual opinion". The Minister for his part ventures only one opinion: that good design is not achieved by "extravagant use of land, wide and draughty streets or lavish expenditure". Indeed, he says, savings of land and money go hand in hand with attractive grouping.

His three experts are of the most famous: Dr. Thomas Sharp, consultant planner for several cathedral towns and designer of some new settlements for the British Forestry Commission, writes Part One on *The English Village*. For the most part, this is a condensation of material already published. He again insists upon a sense of enclosure and on simplicity in the big forms as well as modesty in the municipal details, to attain a successful design for the small community. Of particular interest in Canada, with new northern villages being built and old southern ones rapidly expanded, are his observations on maintaining respect for local character where it exists, and on means to create it where it does not.

The second expert is Frederick Gibberd, well-known for his work in Harlow New Town and for successful essays in mixed residential development around London, who writes Part Two on *The Design of Residential Areas*. He lists the 'given materials' of land forms, house types and road access needs, and sketches many combinations of these elements with paved or planted surfaces to compose pleasing streets or broad spaces. He declares that the object is to advance from the dreary assembly of standard houses on a stereotyped road pattern, toward the fashioning of an intriguing series of eyefulls, the creation of outdoor places as significant as the houses that look upon them. He rightly points out that unity within groups of houses is no longer the automatic result of a narrow range of available materials and techniques, but must be sought positively by the choice and arrangement of compatible forms. This, he admits, takes "a deal of trouble".

The third expert is Sir William Holford of the University of London, planning consultant to the City of London and also to a private development firm in the Toronto area, who contributes Part Three on *Design in City Centres*. He deals briefly with the street and its function of movement, the open place with its value in repose, with street furniture, the placing of monuments, and the handling of the 'precinct' (marked off from surrounding districts of the city by its distinctive uses and patterns of space). He emphasizes that in the civic centre the whole character of the city is expressed in its most intense and dramatic symbols; and that it is likewise the problem in each local centre to capture forms symptomatic of the character special to the surrounding district. He leaves the impression that the city designer, setting out to stalk the *genius loci*, needs as a first item of equipment a stout pair of walking shoes.

It is most refreshing to use a government document so vividly stamped with the personalities of its distinguished authors. What they have to say is surely as apt in Canada as in their homeland; for we too, with our climatic extremes and parsimonious municipalities, must generally group our buildings closely and build them modestly. In short, we must look to the total urban scene much more often than to the isolated architectural triumph, if we are to take pleasure in our multiplying square miles of city. Too often, the design of the insignificant little house is made the subject of publication and prize competitions, as if it were going to be admired as a solo performer. It won't. It will count merely as a voice in the domestic chorus of the dwelling group, the street, the project, the neighbourhood. The composers for that chorus are the city planners, with their surveyors and analysts. The impresario is the developer who brings the plan to life, and makes money doing so. It is for the urban designer, so to say as conductor, finally to give satisfying form to that substance and life which city plans and development have brought about, to shape and blend the given elements (most of them unsophisticated) so that taken together they make a harmonious experience—for participants as well as for witnesses.

No other inexpensive book available has nearly so much in it for the urban designer to ponder as has *Design in Town and Village*.

Ottawa. ALAN H. ARMSTRONG.

Homes, Hostels and Wheelchairs

Housing an Aging Population. American Public Health Association, Inc. Committee on the Hygiene of Housing. Pp. viii, 92. 1953.

Standards of Design. Housing for The Elderly. Massachusetts State Housing Board. Pp. 16. Boston, March 1954.

Notes to Assist Those Interested in Proceeding with Housing Accommodation for Elderly Persons. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Mimeog. Pp. 6. Ottawa, July 1954.

The growing literature on housing for the elderly starts from the knowledge that: (1) the proportion of aged in the total population is much greater than it used to be; (2) despite this greater proportion of elderly people, less of them are living with their families; and (3) their incomes, in most cases, are far from adequate to purchase housing or to pay an economic rent.

If we proceeded along traditional lines, we would try to build more and larger "old peoples' homes". But besides our recognition of the need today, there is a growing belief that the community is not benefited by the outright segregation of the aged and that certainly able-bodied older citizens should be incorporated into the general life of the community. As to disabled persons, regardless of age, there is a feeling that they should be provided with accommodations which not only are appropriate to their physical needs but minimize the degree of their isolation from normal community living.

Indeed, as *Housing an Aging Population* points out, the problem of the aged will not be solved by any single formula. A rational housing program must be "a flexible one which incorporates the aging, increases the general supply of low- and medium-cost dwelling units of acceptable standards, suitable either for the vigorous or those who may be handicapped by age or disease . . ." This conclusion is based on a most interesting review of recent thinking and experimentation, both in the United States and in Western Europe. A wide literature is examined and a good bibliography is provided.

The Massachusetts Board's brochure, following a more conventional approach, has only a little to say about the community relationships of the aged. It simply concludes that "ideally their housing should be adjacent to, but somewhat disconnected from, areas where growing families live." For the most part, it is a detailed statement on matters of building design related directly to the physical needs of the elderly.

It is precisely such specifications of building design—non-skid floors, easy-to-clean windows, not-too-high stair-risers, enough light, enough heat, not too much noise (50 decibels maximum; 30 decibels at night), hand-grips in baths—which, according to the APHA report, should be laid down as gen-

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Divisional Activities

Newfoundland

Community Planning Week received special publicity in the Newfoundland press, attention being focused in news articles and editorials on the need for professional planning service. A comment of our President summed it up: "Foresight pays; let us put an end to random growth. Let us plan ahead for better living".

In Corner Brook the local Branch of CPAC is planning for the 1954-55 season. The Corner Brook *Western Star* has supported the work of the Branch in pressing for the amalgamation of the four communities in the greater Corner Brook area. The *Western Star* has emphasized that the work of adjusting four separate communities into one would be much more difficult if uniformity and good planning were delayed until the decision on amalgamation was made.

Prince Edward Island

At the Annual Meeting of the Division held recently, Dr. Frank W. MacKinnon, Principal of Prince of Wales College, was elected Chairman. Also elected was Mayor Henry Wedge of Summerside as Vice-President; and Mr. J. F. Connolly was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Claude Smith, Miss Lillian Duchemin and Mr. J. J. Morris of Charlottetown, Dr. Henry Moyse of Summerside and Melvin McQuaid of Souris were also elected to the Executive Committee.

The retiring Chairman, Mr. F. W. Hyndman, outlined the work of the Division during the past year and in particular dealt with the Roadside Beautification program carried on at Crapaud. Mr. Hyndman stated that the Division was greatly indebted to the Provincial Government for arranging to contribute on a 'matching' basis a sum up to $100.00 to any community taking part in such a Roadside Beautification program. The Division commended the City Council of Charlottetown for their co-operation in setting aside an area owned by the City for use as a public park. The Chairman strongly recommended that the Division offer its services in establishing and assisting a Ways and Means Committee to explore thoroughly the problems of co-ordination of the City of Charlottetown and its suburban areas.

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Division recently submitted a brief to the Provincial Royal Commission on Educational Finance dealing with four pertinent subjects, namely, (a) advance selection and acquisition of school sites, (b) combination of parks and school playgrounds, (c) provision of temporary school accommodation and (d) stabilization of property assessment through zoning and other planning instruments.

During Community Planning Week, the Nova Scotia Division provided material for a broadcast by Mrs. Major of Halifax on the national network of the CBC. Mr. R. D. Mussett, Chairman of the Halifax Branch, and Mr. G. S. Digby took part in a radio broadcast, "Housing the Family", sponsored by the Welfare Council. Another member of the Division, Mrs. S. F. Hudson, was interviewed on two programs over station CJCH.

At the recent Annual Meeting, Professor R. Graham Murray of Dartmouth and R. D. Mussett of Halifax were named Chairmen of the Nova Scotia Division and the Halifax Branch, respectively. In his address to the meeting, the retiring Chairman, Mr. D. F. MacIsaac, recommended that the Division continue its efforts to increase membership and branches in keeping with an active and constructive program.

New Brunswick

Tentative plans for a Maritime Regional Conference were drafted recently at an Executive Meeting of the Division. Mr. A. E. Willis of Moncton, Chairman of the Division, presided at the meeting. It was proposed that the Conference would be held at the Admiral Beatty Hotel in Saint John on October 4th and 5th. Miss M. L. Lynch of Saint John, Vice-Chairman of the Division, has kindly consented to act as Conference Chairman. Details of the program will be announced later.

Quebec

In Montreal, Mayor Camillien Houde proclaimed June 14th to 20th Community Planning Week. Two radio forums were conducted over station CJMS, Mr. C. E. Campeau and Mr. Lucien Croteau taking part in the discussions. The papers throughout the province were generous in giving space to community planning news.

In a recent address to the secretaries of the Chamber of Commerce of the Province of Quebec, Mr. Roger Gagnon stressed the need for utilizing land to the best advantage, outlining the financial aspects, the need for competent planning advice, the importance of zoning and the necessity of providing adequate traffic arteries in our fast-growing cities.

Ontario

"*We are deeply concerned by the announcement that the City of Toronto will no longer have a full-fledged Department or Commissioner of Planning. It seems incredible that the municipality with the greatest population and highest assessment in the Province of Ontario, and from whom leadership is expected in the development of the Metropolitan Government, should regard planning as ancillary to a Traffic Department*".

In these words, the Ontario Division protested to the Mayor of Toronto against the proposal to reduce the status of planning in that rapidly spreading city. In support of its position, the Division quoted the following statements from the Cumming Report:

"*Local planning boards and councils would continue to exercise an important and indeed an indispensable function in providing for the orderly development of their communities.*

"*The Metropolitan Council should be given adequate powers to direct and control in a general way, the physical development of the entire metropolitan area and to require local development plans and land use regulations to conform to a comprehensive plan of Metropolitan development.*"

The Division's letter went on to say that, if a planning board was to function properly within the framework of the metropolitan program and if all important details of a local policy were to be properly integrated, it would be essential for planning boards to have competent staff of sufficient number. For Metropolitan Toronto, it would be a major catastrophy if the city should cease to regard its own planning staff as vitally important.

Manitoba

This was the third year for observance of Community Planning Week in Manitoba. The Division sent material, covering local problems, to all radio stations, weekly and daily papers and special weekly papers. The chambers of commerce, mayors, reeves, builders' associations and many other groups were drawn into cooperation, and the response more than satisfied the expectations of the Division. Spot announcements were carried by several radio stations, and Messrs. George Rich and Eric Thrift were interviewed over station CBW.

A press conference was held the opening day of the "Week", when Reeve J. A. Ormiston of East St. Paul, Alderman J. Gurzon Harvey of the City of Winnipeg and Mr. Thrift were interviewed. Mr. Thrift stressed the need for a provincial planning department to provide guidance for smaller towns and communities. In Alderman Harvey's opinion, it was obvious that a city the size of Winnipeg could not plan its development effectively without knowing what its neighbours were hoping and planning to do.

Saskatchewan

Community Planning Week was marked in Saskatchewan by the completion of the organization of this new Division. Mr. Stewart Young, Chairman, remarked that the Division had been created to keep in view the need for community planning on a province-wide scale. The Division would act in an advisory capacity to urban and rural municipalities and provincial governments. Community planning, he added, would foresee the physical development of communities and plan accordingly.

Elected to the Executive Committee of the Division with Mr. Young were Miss Jean Downing, Vice-Chairman; Gordon R. Arnott, Secretary-Treasurer; D. J. Cairns, Mrs. J. R. Hoag, F. MacL. Smith and A. E. Wilson, all of Regina.

Alberta

The Annual Meeting and Conference of the Alberta CPAC, held in Edmonton during Community Planning Week, was an outstanding success as indicated by press reports. Delegates were welcomed by Edmonton's Acting Mayor, Alderman Harries, who stated in his opening address that it was the work of CPAC to sell planning to the community. "*Highways and the Ring Road in the Metropolitan Area*" was the subject of a talk by L. G. Grimble.

Dr. Albert Rose, Associate Professor of the School of Social Work, University of Toronto and a National Councillor, spoke at the Annual Meeting on "*The Challenge of Metropolitan Growth*".

Mr. Leonard Gertler was re-elected Chairman of the Division. Also elected to the Divisional Executive were George M. Brown of Calgary, Denis Cole of Medicine Hat, H. W. Brown and G. R. Robins of Lethbridge.

A royal commission is being set up in Alberta to study problems of metropolitan growth. This seems to have resulted from a resolution passed at the Calgary Conference last year, requesting that a body be set up to investigate the necessity for some form of metropolitan government.

British Columbia

Guest speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Division was Mr. Floyd M. Jennings of Seattle, Washington. In his address "*Planning our Municipalities*", Mr. Jennings emphasized civic co-operation with the town planner, whose position, he felt, was to help the citizen crystallize his thinking and execute his plans.

Mr. Hugh A. Martin, re-elected Chairman of the Division at its Annual Meeting, predicted that within the next fifteen years, British Columbia's Lower Mainland would have the greatest amount of industrial energy of any area in the world. In commenting on the work of the Division, Mr. Martin said: "*We can, I think, view with a sense of satisfaction the trend toward the use of technical planning knowledge in the day-to-day operations of some of our cities and municipalities through the establishment of Planning Departments or through the use of planning consultants living within the confines of the municipalities or adjacent thereto. We are deeply conscious that this movement is perhaps confined to the larger urban areas and those communities adjacent but we are also aware that there is a great stirring in the smaller rural communities*".

Planning Personality

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siderable success; unfortunately, although the people voted in favour of the site, the money by-law was lost by a few votes.

At that time, CPAC was just forming the B.C. Division and one of Vancouver's long time planners, Mr. Sandy Walker, managed to persuade Tom to take on the heroic task of organizing the Divisional Office. It was a difficult, complex and sometimes exasperating assignment. Tom McDonald often relates incidents of these days when CPAC was merely a letterhead or telephone number with no office or staff or programme. Since then, CPAC has become an important and successful force and can point to such concrete achievements as organizing the beginnings of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board for the Lower Fraser Valley; agitating for, and succeeding in obtaining, the Capital Regional Planning Board in Victoria; promoting actively the establishment of a Planning Department in the City of Vancouver; encouraging the development of the graduate course in Community Planning at the University of British Columbia and supporting it through a Fellowship contributed by CPAC members. One could mention the eminently successful Regional Planning Conferences in Trail, Prince George, Penticton and many other places which have led to action and important results. Tom McDonald has organized them all and without his unselfish devotion and unparalleled administrative ability none of them would have been a success. H. PETER OBERLANDER.

Homes, Hostels and Wheelchairs

Continued from page five

eral standards for safe and healthful housing anywhere. Doors may be a special problem, because, under present standards, they seem to be about two inches too narrow to admit wheelchairs. But why not, asks the APHA report, redesign wheelchairs? The report also suggests that ramps, or stepless access to buildings, might be desirable for all of us. "If there were enough good housing at prices or rents that could be afforded, there would be no serious problems of housing older people."

For Canadians interested in doing something about housing their own local elderly, CMHC's *Notes* (available from any local CMHC office) are a most useful starting point. They outline the steps necessary, under present national and provincial legislation, to proceed toward the creation of such housing with financial assistance under Section 16 of the National Housing Act, 1954. A careful reading of the *Notes* indicates that they do not encourage a segregational or institutional approach. In fact, the National Housing Act does not authorize financing of a project unless a clear majority of the dwelling units are self-contained and designed for more than a single occupant. For a hostel-type building, moreover, NHA financing would not be available except with the guarantee of a provincial or municipal government. The *Notes* suggest that design should resemble that for the housing of other age groups, with special care to certain features. Good suggestions are made as to how to study location and design; and a reading list is included. E. B.

Maritime and National Meeting

There will be a National Meeting of CPAC in Saint John, New Brunswick, on conjunction with the Maritime CPAC Meetings which are tentatively scheduled for October 4-6. Final arrangements for the Conference will be announced early in September.

Coming Event

The Twenty-second Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland from September 19th to 25th. Further particulars are available from this office.

Ontario Division Publications

Housing and Public Health.
Neighbourhood Conservation.
Planning for the Lakefront and River Valleys.
Redevelopment in Central Districts.

These four booklets are summaries of four Toronto Branch Meetings and are available from the Ontario Division, 32 Isabella Street, Toronto, at a cost of 25 cents each.

Our Upside-down Format

The Editors are not happy about the format of the *Newsletter*. This must be given practical consideration along with other ways of making a bilingual paper truly effective. Meanwhile, our main purpose will be to improve and accelerate the flow of information through the means at hand. The *Newsletter*, in some form, will appear more often and, we earnestly hope, will gradually improve in punctuality, content and appearance.

The next issue, scheduled for early September, will contain, among other things, the annual financial statement of CPAC; the Constitution Committee's proposals regarding By-law Amendments; the Nominating Committee's Report; and an outline of the Agenda of the Maritime and National Meetings.

COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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The object of the Association is to encourage citizen interest in community planning. Active membership is $3.00 per year. Sustaining membership is $25.00 per year. Members receive the CPAC Newsletter/Les Nouvelles de l'A.C.U. published six times yearly, and the bilingual Annual Community Planning Review. Members are encouraged to become active supporters of community planning in their community. Branches have been formed in several cities for this purpose.

If you are not a CPAC Member and you wish to receive this Newsletter, the Community Planning Review and other Members' Publications, return this form to:

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NUMÉRO 3, 1954

Les Nouvelles de l'A.C.U.

L'Urbanisme - vu par la presse

En marge de la semaine d'urbanisme
par ERIC BEECROFT
traduction de GEORGES-F. SÉGUIN

Même dans notre propre famille, on tournait "la semaine d'urbanisme" un peu au ridicule. Nos personnages les plus hautains—et même quelques-uns de nos personnages un peu moins hautains—se demandaient ce qu'allait faire là cette semaine d'urbanisme, entre la semaine de la tarte aux cerises et celle des futurs pères. Ayant moi-même un peu trempé dans cette raillerie, je dois confesser maintenant que beaucoup de mes doutes se sont dissipés, car les résultas obtenus sont convainçants.

Je ne voudrais pas que, de cette confession, on en déduise qu'il faudrait chaque année décréter une certaine semaine spécifique "Semaine d'Urbanisme" partout le Canada. J'ai toujours préconisé que nous n'honorons convenablement nos pères, mères et autres personnes que nous aimons, que lorsque nous les entourons de prévenances l'année durant. Le témoignage d'un moment peut endormir notre conscience pour le reste du temps.

L'A.C.U., évidemment, a fourni beaucoup de matière à la presse, par ses divisions provinciales et par son bureau d'Ottawa, pour la commémoration de la semaine d'urbanisme. Mais quand on lit certains articles de journaux, toutefois, il y a plusieurs points qui nous frappent. D'abord, dans plusieurs centres d'agglomération, des rédacteurs ont profité de cette semaine d'urbanisme pour appuyer le travail d'aménagement de citoyens dans leur propre localité. Par ailleurs, plusieurs rédacteurs, alors qu'ils s'en rapportent à certains articles de l'A.C.U., ont fait des commentaires éloquents quant au but de l'urbanisme. Enfin, les journaux ont prouvé qu'ils appréciaient grandement le besoin de compétence technique en urbanisme dans leur localité.

Solide appui en faveur de l'urbanisme professionnel

Ceux qui ont préconisé que l'A.C.U. devrait mettre en valeur la formation d'urbanistes seront particulièrement intéressés de savoir jusqu'où l'opinion publique

voir page deux

CPAC Newsletter

(See verso)

PUBLISHED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA 169 SOMERSET ST. W., OTTAWA, CANADA

—suite de la page une

emboîte le pas. La presse semble particulièrement s'interesser à nos communiqués relatifs au besoin d'urbanistes professionnels. Partout le pays, on a cité la parole de Jacques Simard à l'effet que seulement 6% des centres de moins de 25,000 âmes se prévalait d'un service d'urbanisme. Un exemple typique nous vient de l'*Avenir du Nord* de Saint-Jérôme, qui dit:

> "L'urbanisme ne doit pas être imposé au peuple; au contraire, c'est le peuple qui doit le réclamer. C'est pourquoi il y aura le plus d'avantages possible quand les autorités municipales de Saint-Jérôme auront recours au lumières d'un technicien qui consacre ses activités à l'aménagement d'une ville comme la nôtre, avec l'élite dirigeante de notre Cité. Faire comprendre aux masses que prévoir et organiser l'avenir d'une agglomération urbaine, c'est sauvegarder les intérêts matériels des habitants, économiser leur temps, leur énergie, protéger leur santé et assurer l'épanouissement de toutes leurs activités dans l'harmonie et dans la joie; telles sont les préoccupations de l'urbaniste."

Quant au *Soleil*, il se base sur le principe que "le beau joint à l'utile est encore moins dispendieux que les improvisations et les constructions du hasard". Dans son numéro du 14 juin, il consacre un article spécial sur la formation professionnelle en urbanisme au Canada. Il décrit ce qui a déjà été fait aux cours avancés du McGill, sous la direction du professeur Harold Spence-Sales, au Manitoba par le professeur V. J. Kostka, en Colombie-Britannique par le professeur Peter Oberlander, ainsi qu'au programme d'étude, récemment discontinué, de l'Université de Toronto.

Les redacteurs appuient l'urbanisme local

La semaine de l'urbanisme a donné l'idée à l'*Ottawa Citizen*, dans son édition du 18 juin, de parler des difficultés fondamentales de réaliser des projets municipaux. Il affirme que la ceinture de verdure, qui devait entourer Ottawa, a été rognée peu à peu parce que les conseils ruraux n'ont pas pu résister aux pressions des propriétaires fonciers, des lotisseurs de terrains et des payeurs de taxes qui s'imaginaient qu'aménagement voulait dire augmentation de taxes. On tire la conclusion que les municipalités—par l'entremise du Provincial ou autrement—doivent travailler de concert, car suffit le manque de coopération d'une seule d'entre elles pour que toute la structure s'écroule.

Parmi les journaux qui ont appuyé les recommendations de leurs concitoyens à l'occasion de la semaine d'urbanisme, *La Tribune* de Sherbrooke fut certes typique. Après avoir félicité l'A.C.U. pour son travail à travers le pays, ce journal attire l'attention sur un mémoire présenté récemment par notre section de Sherbrooke, dont M. Denis Tremblay est président, et par la Chambre de Commerce de Sherbrooke qui a comme président M. John L. Blue. Se basant sur ce mémoire, *La Tribune* recommande aux autorités municipales d'étudier et d'appuyer la suggestion d'une commissoin d'urbanisme à Sherbrooke qui préparerait, en coopération avec le conseil municipal et les représentants des diverses associations civiques, un plan d'aménagement en vue d'une population de 150 à 200,000 âmes.

Le Nouvelliste des Trois-Rivières s'est servi des communiqués de M. Simard pour écrire un éditorial énergique qui s'intitule: *Les Trois-Rivières ont besoin d'un plan directeur*. Voici la conclusion:

> "Le cas s'applique particulièrement aux Trois-Rivières, où la construction d'habitations nouvelles a connu des années de grande activité. Mais d'autres développements, dans les domaines de l'habitation, de l'industrie et du commerce se produiront encore prochainement et il serait urgent de les prévoir, afin qu'ils répondent bien à nos besoins, au lieu de nous créer d'autres problèmes plus graves encore."

La Canalisation

Durant la semaine d'urbanisme, on a beaucoup entendu parler de la canalisation dans les régions intéressées. *Le Daily Standard Freeholder* de Cornwall a profité de l'occasion pour signaler que tout le district de Cornwall a besoin d'être aménagé tant au point de vue régional que local. Le village Iroquois a déjà retenu les services d'un urbaniste en vue de son emplacement entièrement nouveau nécessité par la canalisation. Ce journal a rendu hommage au comité d'urbanisme de Cornwall et des districts environnants.

L'Urbanisme au Manitoba

Dans aucune autre province n'a-t-on vu autant d'enthousiasme dans les petits journaux que dans ceux du Manitoba: partout voyait-on des éditoriaux et des articles sur l'urbanisme. A Winnipeg, reconnu depuis longtemps pour son développement, les quotidiens prêtèrent une attention particulière à l'urbanisme. Le *Free Press* a présenté un intéressant résumé sur les réalisations dans le Grand Winnipeg; mais en même temps, il n'oublia pas de signaler les problèmes à venir, et prévint qu'il n'y avait aucunement lieu de rester veule.

La *Tribune's* s'enorgueillit du fait que l'idée d'une semaine d'urbanisme vient de notre division du Manitoba, et ce, il y a trois ans. Ce journal cite tous les avantages obtenus par le Grand Winnipeg du plan directeur qui, grâce à la prévoyance de la Chambre de Commerce et d'autres organismes civiques, fut inauguré en 1944. "Un plan directeur", dit-on "c'est un plan de citoyens. Son utilité et sa récompense se traduisent par le bien-être, et reposent sur le point jusqu'où le citoyen ordinaire s'intéresse à la différence qui existe entre une ville vivante et un dortoir".

Les prochains dix ans

La prédiction de l'A.C.U. que le Canada, d'ici dix ans, construirait environ un million de maisons dans un territoire d'un quart de million d'acres, i.e. 360 milles carrés, suscita beaucoup d'intérêt. Plusieurs ont dû déplorer l'idée qu'un développement aussi gigantesque pourrait se faire d'une façon aussi dissipatrice et inéfficace que par le passé. Les éditoriaux typiques dans ce sens sont ceux que l'on trouva dans *The Moncton Transcript*, *La Voix de l'Est* de Granby, Québec, *The Daily News* de Saint-John, et *The Owen Sound Sun Times*. "Plus maintenant," déclare le *Sun Times*,

"voit-on une expansion industrielle ou domiciliaire se faire selon la fantaisie de certains individus quand il s'agit de sauvegarder les intérêts économiques et esthétiques de la communauté." Comme plusieurs autres centres, Owen Sound, ou Grey County, s'est apparemment intéressé à l'urbanisme aux fins d'attirer de l'industrie nouvelle. Ceci semble une étape typique du cheminement de plusieurs centres vers un intérêt conséquent apporté à l'urbanisme.

"Laideur et médiocrité de notre paysage urbain"

L'un des articles les plus sérieux publiés à l'occasion de la Semaine d'Urbanisme a paru dans l'*Action Catholique* de Québec le 16 juin. Se servant du titre ci-haut mentionné, l'auteur, Charles Pelletier, a attiré l'attention sur le mémoire de la division du Québec de l'A.C.U., présenté à la Commission Tremblay, où l'on décrit l'état des villes et villages dans la province de Québec. Il a surtout mis en garde contre la manière dont se comportent certains groupes d'imprévoyants et de spéculateurs qui font avorter les projets de conseils municipaux bien pensants qui sont ordinairement tourmentés par d'autres problèmes dont celui d'ordre financier, et qui ne sont pas assez renseignés pour examiner des projets alternatifs. M. Pelletier demande une revision des lois d'urbanisme. Il prouve la nécessité d'un aménagement provincial, et enfin réclame le développement d'une opinion experte et tenace capable de poursuivre les buts de l'urbanisme.

Que chaque semaine soit une semaine d'urbanisme

Il est évident que ce sont les éditoriaux des journaux du Québec et du Manitoba qui ont mené le bal par leurs commentaires durant la "semaine". Dans l'Ontario, toutefois, il y a eu des nouvelles et des commentaires dans un grand nombre de journaux, depuis le *Standard* de Saint Catharines jusqu'au *Daily Nugget* de North Bay. Que la Colombie-Britannique n'ait pas montré beaucoup d'intérêt envers la semaine d'urbanisme en tant que telle, c'est sans doute dû au fait que la presse de cette province est normalement affairée de problèmes d'urbanisme.

En effet, pour plusieurs journaux dans plusieurs provinces, chaque semaine est une semaine d'urbanisme. Dans un seul numéro (2 juillet) du *Globe and Mail*, je n'ai pas trouvé moins de trois articles de fond sur d'importants problèmes d'urbanisme: (1) la reduction incroyable des territoires d'agriculture resultant de l'accroissement urbain dans la péninsule du Niagara; (2) le grave problème des écoles ontariennes dans la course aux emplacements; et (3) le besoin urgent pour le réaménagement de la zone centrale de Toronto.

Nous ne pouvons pas douter du vif intérêt des éditeurs à l'égard de l'aménagement local et du progrès de l'accroissement urbain. Ce sont des sujets à nouvelles partout, et il semble que les divisions de l'A.C.U., s'ils préparent le matériel voulu pour leurs journaux locaux, trouveront une belle coopération l'année durant.

Considérations sociales et esthétiques

Certains lecteurs seront peut-être surpris de savoir combien d'éditeurs partout le pays ne regardent que le côté esthétique dans l'urbanisme. L'opinion générale aujourd'hui est qu'il n'est vraiment plus nécessaire de voir des bâtisses monotones et des paysages négligés, ce que nous avons toléré dans notre hâte de nous procurer un abri. Je pense que dans la prochaine décade, le Canada deviendra un magnifique champ d'action pour les architects, les paysagistes et les constructeurs qui ont le sens de l'urbanisme.

Evidemment, on se fait beaucoup de souci quant aux apparences par désir d'impressionner et d'attirer le touriste. Nul autre que M. D. Leo Dolan, directeur de l'office des voyages du gouvernment canadien, a émis un communiqué avant même notre semaine d'urbanisme, au sujet de l'importance, pour l'industrie du tourisme, des centres aménagés d'une manière attrayante.

Ce communiqué fut l'un des plus cités, à partir de la Colombie-Britannique jusqu'à Terreneuve. Certains journaux sont allés encore plus loin, et ont allégués qu'une belle apparence attirait l'industrie ainsi que des résidants permanents.

Par-dessus l'intérêt superficiel que comporte l'esthétique, que ce soit pour une raison commerciale ou autre, nous trouvons un point qui touche une nécessité sociale mieux sentie. Ce point de vue n'a pas été souligné durant "la semaine", mais, dans le *Globe and Mail* du 12 juillet, j'ai trouvé un énoncé qui ressemble bien au but ultime de l'urbanisme:

> "L'insuccès général quant à l'aménagement de nos nouveaux territoires, pour que notre vie s'écoule dans un milieu normal, est une de nos plus malheureuses faiblesses d'accroissement d'après-guerre. Dans quelques cas seulement avons-nous vu un centre, dans nos développements domiciliaires aménagé avec connaissance de cause. Nous ne voulons pas seulement parler d'un bâtiment ou d'une salle de réunion, mais d'un centre physique prévoyant les intérêts et les idéaux communs.
>
> "C'est une affaire complexe dans la plupart des cas. Cela comprend des parcs, des écoles, des églises, une salle de concerts, des centres récréatifs, et quelques fois un théatre. Mais ce n'est pas seulement un avantage matériel, mais un sentiment plus abstrait créé par la fidélité au bon voisinage—une réalisation essentiellement humaine. Tout ceci ne peut pas se faire sur ordre, mais il y a des facteurs impondérables, tels la géographie, les lignes frontières, les commodités de travail, et d'autres facteurs semblables, qui sont susceptibles de façonner le caractère d'un centre donné.
>
> "Il est regrettables que l'on n'insiste pas pour que nos nouveaux développements ne soient pas organisés sur une base de bon voisinage. Ceci pourrait être fait si nos opérations d'aménagement etaient unifiées, intégrées et effectives sur tout un territoire, et si le tout était confié à un urbaniste au courant de la vie urbaine et de ses dangers. Actuellement, nous continuons à commettre les mêmes erreurs qui affligent les vieux districts urbains. Nous éternisons la formule qui a détruit la vie familiale et qui a détaché les familles les unes des autres. Ceci est un crime contre la postérité, particulièrement en 1954. Nous devrions profiter non seulement des erreurs passées, mais des

idées présentes. Quand quelqu'un insistera-t-il pour que nous fassions les deux?"

La semaine d'urbanisme fut-elle un succès?

Il n'y a aucun doute que les renseignements fournis à la presse, durant la semaine d'urbanisme, a soulevé un certain intérêt parmi les éditeurs et les journalistes. Mais il est aussi un fait que, si nous en jugeons par la presse de la Colombie-Britannique et ailleurs où l'on n'a pas mis en évidence "notre semaine", la presse en général est prête à écrire l'année durant sur l'urbanisme s'il y a des factions locales actives prêtes à assembler et distribuer du matériel d'intérêt local.

La semaine d'urbanisme a prouvé, une fois de plus, que le public canadien était prêt à appuyer une politique urbaine raisonnée. Toutefois, les véritables difficultés résident dans cette prise de conscience des problèmes urbains et dans l'application des mesures appropriées. La presse, la radio et les autre moyens de publicité sont, je crois, prêts à servir nos intérêts, si nous les revendiquons.

Si nous mettons de l'avant, dans nos groupes communautaires, non pas une, mais cinquante-deux semaines d'efforts par année, je suis certains que nous aurons des résultats satisfaisants. Si nous réussissons, d'ici quelques années, aussi bien que nous le devrions la semaine d'urbanisme pourrait ne pas être plus nécessaire que la semaine du "va à l'école" ou du "brosse tes dents".

La Syntaxe de Projets d'Amenagement de Municipalities

"*Design in Town and Village*", par Thomas Sharp, Frederick Gibberd and William G. Holford, avec avant-propos du Très Honorable Harold MacMillan. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1952. Frontis., vi plus 120 pages, 209 dessins et photos. (Disponible au United Kingdom Information Office, Ottawa, $1.70).

Ce volume, d'aprés le ministre qui a écrit la préface, traite des "problèmes soulevés par les projets d'allotissement et de tracé des bâtiments . . . On a fait beaucoup pour améliorer les maisons unifamiliales. Mais l'effet général a très souvent été lent . . ." On a demandé à trois personnes de mettre leur expérience à contribution, puisque les questions invoquées sont "beaucoup du ressort de l'opinion individuelle." Pour sa part, le ministre ne hasarde qu'une seule opinion: qu'on n'obtient pas de bons projets en faisant un usage immodéré de terrain, de rues larges et exposées à tous les vents, ni par des dépenses extravagantes". En effet, dit-il, l'économie de terrain et d'argent va de pair avec un groupement attrayant.

Ses trois experts sont parmi les plus célèbres: Dr. Thomas Sharp, urbaniste conseil de plusieurs villes épiscopales, et l'auteur de quelques nouveaux projets d'urbanisme pour le compte de la British Forestry Commission, écrit la première partie qui traite de *The English Village*. Dans son ensemble, c'est un résumé de la matière déjà publiée. Il met de nouveau l'accent sur une certaine notion de "l'enclosure", sur la simplicité des lignes, sur la modération quant aux détails ayant trait à l'aménagement des municipalités en vue de parvenir à un plan heureux pour la création de la petite localité. Ses observations visant à respecter le caractère local là où il existe et les moyens d'en créer un là où il n'y en a pas, sont particulièrement intéressantes pour le Canada où l'on construit de nouveaux villages ou nord et où les villages plus anciens, situés au sud, se développent rapidement.

Le deuxième expert est monsieur Frederick Gibberd, bien connu pour ses travaux dans le Harlow New Town, et pour ses réalisations dans le domaine de la construction résidentielle mixte qu'il a menées à bonne fin, et aux environs de Londres. Il est l'auteur de la deuxième partie du volume qui s'intitule "*Design of Residential Areas*". Il fait l'inventaire des "matériaux disponibles" au point de vue terrain, des genres de maisons et des besoins en routes d'accès; il esquisse plusieurs combinaisons de ces éléments auxquels il mêle des surfaces pavées ou des coins de verdure pour former de jolies rues ou de grands emplacements agréables. Il va jusqu'à dire qu'il faut abandonner la disposition monotone de maisons toutes semblables en bordure de routes, toutes construites d'après le même cliché, et tâcher d'ériger plutôt des séries de maisons qui éveilleront la curiosité tout en charmant l'œil, et d'aménager à l'extérieur des endroits aussi agréables que les maisons qui constituent le voisinage. Il signale avec raison que l'on n'obtient plus automatiquement un groupement harmonieux de maisons en utilisant uniquement une quantité limitée de matériaux et de techniques disponibles; mais qu'il faut à tout prix faire un choix judicieux afin d'arriver à un ensemble harmonieux. Pour cela, admet-il, il faut se donner "bien de la peine".

Le troisième expert est Sir William Holford de l'Université de Londres, l'urbaniste conseil de la cité de Londres, et aussi d'une firme de construction de la région de Toronto. Sir William est l'auteur de la troisième partie intitulée "*Design in City Centres*". Il traite brièvement des rues et de leur rôle par rapport à la circulation, des espaces libres et de leur importance pour le repos, des dispositifs ayant trait aux services municipaux, tels que lampes de rues, affiches, bornes-fontaines, etc.; du site des monuments, et de la façon d'aménager les environs (séparés des quartiers environnants de la cité par leur caractère distinct et par la disposition du terrain). Il souligne le fait que toute la physionomie d'une cité se reflète dans le centre civique, par ses symboles les plus forts et les plus frappants; qu'il existe un problème semblable dans chaque localité, qui consiste à faire usage de modèles qui expriment à la perfection le caractère particulier du voisinage. Il laisse l'impression que l'urbaniste, à la recherche du *genius loci*, a avant tout besoin d'une solide paire de chaussures.

Il est très récomfortant de se servir d'un document publié par le gouvernement qui soit si fortement imprégné de la personnalité d'auteurs aussi distingués. Ce qu'ils ont à dire s'applique certainement tout aussi bien au Canada qu'à leur propre pays; car nous aussi, avec les écarts extrêmes de notre climat et nos municipalités parcimonieuses, devons souvent grouper étroitement nos bâtiments et les construire modestement. En quelques mots, disons qu'il s'agit surtout de réaliser l'ensemble du tableau urbain plutôt que d'aspirer à des triomphes architecturaux isolés, si nous voulons multiplier les milles carrés de villes.

Trop souvent, le modèle d'une petite maison tout à fait insignifiante devient l'objet d'une grosse publicité et de concours comme si l'on devait admirer cette maison pour le rôle qu'elle doit jouer comme unité isolée. Non certes, elle ne représentera qu'une voix dans le chœur domestique du groupe d'habitations, de la rue, du projet, du voisinage. Les compositeurs de ce chœur sont les urbanistes avec leurs arpenteurs et leurs analystes. L'impresario est celui qui donne la vie au plan élaboré et qui, ainsi, en retire un revenu. Il incombe finalement à l'architecte d'un projet particulier, en quelque sorte à titre de chef d'orchestre, de donner une forme satisfaisante à cette substance et à cette vie que l'aménagement et la construction de la ville ont occasionnés; de modeler et de marier avec élégance les éléments disponibles (la plupart non adultérés) pour que l'ensemble fasse un tout harmonieux tant pour les acteurs que pour les spectateurs. Il n'existe aucun autre volume à si bon marché qui possède autant de données pour l'urbaniste que "*Design in Town and Village*".

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